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A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED

At the *New Chapel* in the *City-Road*,

On the Ninth of MARCH 1791,

At the FUNERAL of the late

Rev. Mr. JOHN WESLEY.

By JOHN WHITEHEAD, M.D. K

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write,
blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth,
yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours,
and their works do follow them. Rev. xiv. 13.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

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in Town and Country. 1791.

[Price SIXPENCE.]



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The following Discourse was delivered extempore, and a Copy of it taken in short hand, by a Nephew of Mr. Marsom, Bookseller, in High Holborn. This Copy I procured, and in some places have taken the liberty to add a sentence or two, where the subject would easily admit of farther illustration. As the Discourse extended to a considerable length, I have been obliged to omit the exhortation delivered at the end of it.

JOHN WHITEHEAD.

[Entered at STATIONER'S HALL.]

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A DISCOURSE, &c.

2 SAMUEL. iii. 38.

Know ye not, that there is a Prince, and a great man fallen this day in Israel?

I Shall only observe on the passage of Scripture which I have now read, that the Hebrew word, which is rendered Prince, sometimes signifies a Leader; and sometimes also it is applied to a person of superior or princely qualities. In this general sense the passage may be applied to that eminent Servant of God, of whose character I am now to speak. This is all the use I shall make of the words; I consider them only as a motto to the Discourse I intend to deliver.

When we consider the public character of the late Rev. Mr. WESLEY, and the various opinions which have been entertained concerning him: when we consider the extent of his labours, the influence which he has had over a large body of people, and the prevalence of his sentiments, not only in these, but even in other nations;

tions ; it becomes a matter of some importance to enquire into the leading features of his character, both as a Man, and as a Minister of the Gospel. This I mean to do in the present Discourse.

But you must not expect the flowers of Eloquence, nor the splendid Ornaments of Speech ; these are things which I do not much cultivate. I will, however, endeavour to speak with plainness and propriety, so as to be understood ; and I hope that in going through the various matters I intend to speak of, you will receive instruction and profit.

I. 1. Although the acquisition of human learning has been little esteemed by some religious people ; yet we must acknowledge that it is of very considerable service to a Minister of the Gospel. The knowledge of languages, and of arts and sciences, is not only an ornament to the mind, but it enlarges the human faculties ; it improves the understanding, gives a habit of thinking closely and reasoning justly ; and prepares the mind, when under a proper direction for great attainments even in religion. These advantages Mr. WESLEY possessed in a high degree, and he knew well how to improve them to the most useful purpose in his ministerial labours. His mind was richly furnished with literature in its various branches : he was well read in antient, and

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several languages studied youth, progress in raised his Scholar. men who friends to lege he g and there at that formed h tiquity. company quotation Classics. curred in not but b critic ; th tered into with their pieces fro travelled, for his am But he kind to pr likewise o tention. Scriptures the New and so cor late I have

several modern tongues. In the learned languages he was a critic; and must have studied them with peculiar pleasure in his youth, or he could not have made that progress in classical learning, which so justly raised him to a distinguished rank as a Scholar. It has been acknowledged by men who were good judges, and no great friends to Mr. WESLEY, that when at College he gave proofs of a fine classical taste: and there are some poems written by him at that time, which shew that he had formed his taste on the best models of antiquity. Those who were much in his company, and heard his apt and pointed quotations from the Greek and Roman Classics, on the various occasions which occurred in travelling and conversation, could not but be sensible that he read them as a critic; that he admired their style, had entered into their spirit, and was delighted with their beauties.—He has selected some pieces from the Roman Classics; and as he travelled, he would sometimes read them for his amusement.

But he did not confine his studies of this kind to profane literature: Sacred learning likewise occupied much of his time and attention. He was well read in the Hebrew Scriptures; and in the original language of the New Testament he was an able critic, and so conversant with it that sometimes of late I have been exceedingly surprized to observe,

observe, that when he has evidently been at a loss to repeat a passage out of the New Testament in the words of our common translation, he was never at a loss to repeat it in the original Greek; the words seemed to flow without the least difficulty or hesitation, and he was always correct in reciting them; which made it evident to me that the words and phrases of the original were more familiar to him than the words of any translation.

2. The works of God in the creation afford another fruitful source of instruction and pleasure to an enquiring mind; and the five Volumes which he published on *Natural Philosophy*, shew how well he had studied that branch of knowledge. It is true, he did not study the higher branches of the Mathematics; but he esteemed the knowledge of this science of great importance in the improvement of the mind. It forms a person to a habit of close attention to a subject, and of thinking and reasoning justly upon it. And it appears to me that he applied himself to the study of it in his youth, so far as to make himself master of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia*, and of his *Theory of Light and Colours*.

3. The *Art of Logic* is another branch of knowledge, which he had cultivated with the utmost attention and care. It has been universally acknowledged that he was a master in it. But Logic, in his view of it,

is not what in the school nor of man without a doubt, is common in his own the art of of judging lively: or, learning and

4. If we the early paid a strong character was always revealed he was attended and so far he undoubted regular in of it.

5. If we enquiring that he possessed a subject the man to have ing highly the knowledge arts and so God; he v and inten whatever quires. he had firm

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is not what has been commonly so called in the schools : it is not the art of wrangling, nor of making frivolous distinctions, often without a difference. Logic, according to him, is common sense improved by art ; or in his own words “ The art of good sense ; the art of comprehending things clearly ; of judging truly ; and of reasoning conclusively : or, in another view of it, the art of learning and teaching.”

4. If we take a view of his conduct in the early part of life, we shall find, that he paid a strict attention to religion : his character was moral from early youth ; he always revered God and his sacred word : he was attentive to the forms of religion, and so far as he at that time understood it, he undoubtedly was conscientious and regular in the practice of all the duties of it.

5. If we consider his qualifications for enquiring after truth, I think we shall find that he possessed every requisite to examine a subject that we could expect or wish a man to have : a strong natural understanding highly cultivated, and well stored with the knowledge of languages, and of various arts and sciences ; he had a reverence for God ; he was conscientious in all his ways, and intent upon discovering the truth, whatever became the subject of his enquiries. And it evidently appears, that he had firmness and resolution to embrace truth

those who might think of themselves as
 had formerly thought of himself.

“ Are they read in Philosophy? so was
 In ancient or modern Tongues? so
 as I also. Are they versed in the science
 of Divinity? I too have studied it many
 years. Can they talk fluently on spiritual
 things? the very same could I do. Are
 they plenteous in alms? Behold I gave all
 my goods to feed the poor. Do they give
 their labour as well as their substance? I
 have laboured more abundantly than they
 all. Are they willing to suffer for their
 brethren? I have thrown up my friends,
 reputation, and ease. I have put my life
 in my hand. I have given my body to be
 scorched up with heat; consumed with toil
 and weariness, or whatever God should
 please to bring upon me. But does this
 make me acceptable to God. Does all I
 ever did or can, *know, say, give, do or suffer,*
 justify me in his sight? By no means. If
 the Oracles of God are true; if we are still
 to abide by the law and the testimony; all
 these things, though when enobled by faith
 in Christ, they are holy, just, and good;
 yet without it are dung and dross. This
 when I have learned, that, having nothing
 of or of myself to plead, I have no hope
 but that if I seek I shall find Christ, and be
 found in him, not having my own righte-
 ousness, but that which is through the faith

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of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

These were the thoughts he had of himself at this time, when his understanding was opened to the view of gospel truths; when he began to see the purity and holiness of God and his own sinfulness, notwithstanding all the excellencies he had to plead in the opinion of others.

Let us now observe, that this opinion was not taken up rashly: no doubt many of his friends, when they heard him speak in this manner, thought him beside himself: when they considered his former manner of life, and his regularity in every part of his conduct, and heard him say that he was a sinner, a sinner under the wrath of God, a sinner that stood in need of mercy; they looked upon him as almost insane. But this opinion of himself was the result of the most mature enquiry: it was not an enthusiastic notion, the effect of an heated imagination; it was a conviction of his mind founded on a scriptural and rational view of the nature of God, and of his own state. Consider, I beseech you, what I have been observing of his qualifications to enquire after truth: a man of a strong understanding, of a cultivated mind, accustomed to the habit of reasoning, accustomed to "investigate every thing in the most cautious manner, before he drew his conclusions: and tell me if this be the conduct of an enthusiast?

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If it be the character of one that takes up
 things rashly ; that follows the dictates of a
 wild imagination ? Will any man calmly
 affirm this ? It is evident, that this opinion
 of himself was not taken up in any such
 way. He tells us, that after conversing
 with people of experience, he sat down and
 read his Greek Testament over, with a
 view to the grand and leading doctrines of
 justification : he could not be satisfied with
 any thing less than this : he proceeded upon
 conviction in every step that he took. And
 let me ask if any man could proceed with
 more caution, or take wiser methods to
 guard against error, in a matter of such im-
 portance to his own comfort and happiness,
 and to the peace and comfort of others ?
 Here again we may trace the marks of a
 great and liberal mind ; when he saw the
 truth he embraced it, though it condemned
 himself. This is not the case with all : how
 many see the truth and shrink from it ? He
 on the contrary embraced it though it con-
 demned him ; and though he knew the pro-
 scription of it would expose him to ridicule,
 contempt, and reproach. Is it possible for
 any man to give a stronger proof than this,
 that he acts from conviction ; and from a
 love of (what at least he conceives to be)
 the truth ? Had all those who have read
 Mr. WESLEY's writings, or heard him preach
 with the same sincerity and firmness
 as he did, the number of converts would
 have

have been much more numerous than we have yet seen them.

II. 1. We shall now endeavour to take a view of his religious sentiments. He made up his mind upon the doctrines he taught as I have observed before, in the most cautious manner, examining the scripture continually, never adopting any opinion without evidence from Scripture and reason. So far was he from following an heated imagination, or taking up opinions as an enthusiast, that he maintained we ought to use our understanding, compare one thing with another, and draw just conclusions from such comparisons, as well in matters of religion as in other things. It is in this sense he uses the word reason when he says "There are many that utterly decry the use of reason in religion, nay, that condemn all reasoning concerning the things of God as utterly destructive of true religion; but we can in no wise agree with this. We find no authority for it in holy writ. So far from it, that we find there both our Lord and his Apostles reasoning continually with their opposers. Neither do we know in the productions of ancient and modern times such a chain of reasoning and argumentation so close, so solid, so regularly connected as the Epistle to the Hebrews. And the strongest reasoner whom we have ever observed (excepting only Jesus of Nazareth) was that Paul of Tarsus; the same who

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left that plain direction for all Christians,
 " In malice or wickedness be ye children ;
 but in understanding, or reason, be ye
 men."

It is evident from these words, that Mr. WESLEY deemed it necessary to use his reason in searching into the things of God. He read the Scriptures, and used his understanding in the best manner he could, to comprehend their meaning. He formed his religious principles in this way ; he examined every step he took, and admitted no doctrine, nor any interpretation of Scripture, but what appeared to him to be agreeable to reason.

How absurd is it to suppose, that we must lay aside our reason in matters of religion ! What has a man to guide him, if he lay aside the use of his reason ? You will say the Scriptures are the rule of our faith and practice : but, I ask how a man can apply the rule without using his reason ? What has he to shew him that he applies it right, that he is not mistaken ? A man that gives up his reason in matters of religion, I will even say in matters of experience, in matters that concern the internal state of his own mind, abandons himself to imagination, and is liable to be carried away by his passions, he knows not whither. Like a ship at sea without a rudder and without a compass, he has nothing to direct him how to steer his course, and he cannot tell whither he is
 B 2 going.

going. How justly then did the Rev. Mr. WESLEY adopt this principle, that we ought to use our reason to guard our minds from error ; and to enable us to form a true judgment both of Scripture and experience.

2. Let us now take a view of his general notion of religion. Speaking to one who required a religion agreeable to reason, he says, " We join with you in desiring a religion founded on reason, and every way agreeable thereto. But one question remains to be asked, what do you mean by reason ? I suppose you mean the eternal reason, or, the nature of things : the nature of God, and the nature of man, with the relations necessarily subsisting between them. This is the very religion we preach : a religion evidently founded on, and every way agreeable to eternal reason, to the essential nature of things. Its foundation stands on the nature of God, and the nature of man, with their mutual relations."

We have here his general view of religion ; and he publicly avows that the Gospel which he preached is agreeable to this view : that it is agreeable to the nature of God and the nature of man, with their mutual relations. He was indeed at the utmost distance from the supposition, that the Gospel, as a system, is inconsistent with reason. And he explained and illustrated on some occasions, the general doctrine

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which he taught, in such a way as to shew that they are conformable to the general principle, which he has here laid down. The outcry then which has been raised against him, and the whole body with whom he was connected as enthusiasts and fanatics, is wholly unfounded ; it only proceeds from the workings of a prejudiced mind, and a want of attention to the things spoken.

3. The Gospel, considered as a general plan of salvation, he viewed as a display of the divine perfections, in a way agreeable to the nature of God ; in which all the divine attributes harmonize, and shine forth with peculiar lustre. Divine love in the gift of a Redeemer : divine wisdom, conspicuous in the plan of redemption : divine justice, tempered with mercy to man, in the death of the Saviour ; divine energy and power in making the whole effectual to raise a fallen creature from a state of sin and misery, to a state of holiness and happiness and from a state of death, to immortal life and glory. All these are conspicuous in the Gospel, as a general plan of salvation ; and shine forth in the face of Jesus Christ with peculiar glory. Thus far then the Gospel, in his view of it, is worthy of God, and coincides with our notions of the harmony and unity of the divine attributes.

4. The Gospel, considered as a means to

attain an end, discovers as great fitness in the means to the end, as can possibly be discovered in the structure of natural bodies, or in the various operations of nature from a view of which we draw our arguments for the existence of God. How often have you heard this excellent man enlarge on these things? How often has he shewn you, that the Gospel affords as clear a display of the moral perfections of God, as the works of nature do of his existence? This certainly was not an irrational view of the Gospel; but shewed a mind enlarged, capacious, capable of comprehending great things, of investigating every part of the Gospel, and of harmonizing the whole.

5. Considering the Gospel as holding forth benefits to man, those benefits are suited to the nature and state of man. How often have you heard him explain this? Man is blind, ignorant, wandering out of the way; his mind being estranged from God, he lives without God in the world. The Gospel, considered only as a system of moral truths, is adapted to enlighten the understanding and direct the judgment. But experience and observation may convince us, as well as the Scripture, that a man may contemplate moral truths, and learn to discourse well of them, without acquiring a practical moral principle, of sufficient strength to reform his conduct. It is conscience that

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judges of the right or wrong of a man's motives and actions. And till conscience interpose its authority, and pass sentence on him, the man remains insensible of his own state and condition, however well he may discourse on morality in general. He is, in the language of Scripture, dead in trespasses and sins. The Gospel then, being the power of God to salvation, must be more than a mere system of morals. It promises, and God actually gives, the spirit of promise, which convinces the world of sin. The Spirit of God accompanies the word of the Gospel, and the other means of grace, and makes them effectual to awaken conscience to the exercise of its office, to pass the sentence of condemnation for what has been done wrong; and the speculative truths of the understanding being thus combined with the dictates of conscience, a practical principle is formed of sufficient strength to restrain the passions and reform the conduct. This our Rev. Father in the gospel used to call repentance, and often conviction for sin. And was he irrational in this? Is not this blessing of the gospel agreeable to the state, and to the natural faculties of man?

6. He considered the gospel as a dispensation of mercy to men, holding forth pardon, a free pardon of sin to all who repent and believe in Christ Jesus. That this is a scriptural doctrine no man can doubt who reads.

reads the New Testament : it is interwoven with every part of scripture. It will bear the test of reason also. It is suited to the state and wants of men, as they stand related to an holy God. It is suited to the wants of every man living : every man has sinned and come short of the glory of God ; every man therefore stands in need of mercy. It was not then irrational in our great Minister to hold forth the rich display of divine grace in Christ Jesus to penitent sinners, in the free manner that he did. His doctrine is founded on a general view of the scriptures ; on the peculiar promises of the gospel : and it is suited to the present condition and wants of men as they stand related to God and the prospects of another world.

7. The gospel enjoins universal holiness both in heart and in the conduct of life. The design of it is to regulate our affections, and govern our actions. It requires us to be dead to the world and alive to God : to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves : to do unto others as we would they should do unto us. And God has promised in the gospel, the continual aid and assistance of his holy Spirit, to strengthen us with all might in the inner man : Christ is a Saviour that is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him ; and there is a throne of grace, at which we may obtain

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not only mercy, but grace to help in time of need. To him who rightly believes the gospel, it is a means adequate to the end intended by it : to him it is a quickening spirit, a purifying and cleansing word, the power of God to his salvation : it influences every faculty of his mind, and regulates every action of his life : to his mind it exhibits such views of paternal love in every part of the plan of redemption, and of a superintending Providence, directing all things with unerring wisdom, to promote his holiness here, and his happiness and glory hereafter, that he is continually animated to the practice of every Christian virtue, and strengthened with patience to run the race that is set before him.

The gospel then, considered as a large comprehensive plan of redemption, holds forth blessings suited to our present state and necessities : wisdom to instruct us, grace to justify or pardon, and to sanctify and cleanse us from evil ; with promises of protection and help through the snares and difficulties of life. It operates upon us in a way that is suited to our faculties : it enlightens the understanding, awakens the conscience, governs the will, and regulates the affections. Nor are its benefits confined to the present life, they extend to the regions of the dead, and expand our views to the prospects of eternity. What a glorious view does the gospel hold forth to us of a resurrection from the

the dead? Our Lord hath died and risen again that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. They that die in the Lord are still under his protection and guidance. Death cannot separate any from the love of Christ. The gospel therefore in this view holds forth blessings suited to our necessities, as comprehensive as our wants and adapted to our state in life and death and the enjoyments of a glorious and happy eternity. These views he has held forth to you again and again, with energy and force and I hope they will make a lasting impression upon you.

8. But I must observe further, that in explaining the order in which the blessings of the gospel are promised to man, he shewed a mind well instructed in the Oracles of God, and well acquainted with human nature:

There is not perhaps greater confusion in any part of the systems of religion, or in the common explanations given of the Gospel than in this; I mean in the order in which the blessings of the Gospel are promised to us, and in which we ought to expect them. We must say, that our Father in the Gospel, who is gone to his reward, had an excellent introduction to this part of his ministerial office: he himself had entered in at the right door. When a Minister is awakened in his own heart, when he is truly sensible of his sin and want of a Sa-

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viour ; and comes to God for mercy as a
 poor sinner, and accepts it as the free gift of
 God through Jesus Christ ; being sensible
 that he must be justified (or pardoned) by
 faith, without the deeds of the law ; he is
 well prepared to instruct others ; and to
 instruct them not only in the right way, but
 also in the right order in which we ought to
 expect the benefits of the Gospel. How
 accurate was Mr. WESLEY in shewing that
 the first step to be a Christian, is to repent ;
 that till the conscience be awakened to a
 true sense of the evil of sin, a man cannot
 enter into a state of justification : it would
 totally subvert the design of the Gospel,
 were it possible that an unawakened person
 could be justified. The very supposition
 frustrates every intention of the coming of
 the Son of God ; which was to deliver us
 from sin, to reconcile us to God, and to
 prepare us for heaven. He has carefully
 and properly distinguished these matters in
 his preaching and writings : how often has
 he told you that the awakening of conscience
 is the first step in experimental religion ; and
 that till a man is convinced of the evil of
 sin and is determined to depart from it ; till
 he is convinced that there is a beauty in
 holiness, and something truly desirable in
 being reconciled to God ; he is not pre-
 pared to receive Christ. It would be well
 if all the ministers of the Gospel laid this
 true foundation of Christian experience ;
 and

and did not confound the order in which the blessings of the Gospel are given to the soul. It has been a singular blessing to you and to the body of the Methodists at large, that your ministers have so accurately distinguished these things, and guarded you against error in a matter that so nearly concerns your peace and your progress in the divine life. You have by these distinctions been enabled to judge with more certainty of your state of mind, and to what degree of experience you have already attained in the things of God : you have been enabled to see more distinctly and clearly the benefits of the Gospel which are still before you, and have been animated in the pursuit of them, by an assurance of success, if you persevere in the way which God has appointed.

In marking so distinctly the order in which we experience the benefits of the Gospel, Mr. WESLEY, in my opinion, has followed the example of our Lord and his Apostles. Our Lord began his preaching by saying, *Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.** Peter, preaching to the Jews at Jerusalem, says, *Repent ye and be converted.†* Paul has made this distinction in the most pointed manner : I kept back nothing says he, that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you, publickly and from house to house : tes-

* Matt. iv. 17. † Acts iii. 19.

tifying

tifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, *repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*† But he has not only followed the Scripture in observing this order, but also reason and the natural order of things. Does not the natural order of things require, that a man be first convinced of his faults, before he can be reclaimed from them? Must not a man be conscious of his condemnation before he will apply to God for pardon? Our progress in Christian experience bears a striking analogy to our progress in any art or science. A man must first be instructed in the fundamental principles of an art or science, before he can proceed to the higher branches of it. The first step prepares him for the second, and so on through the whole of his progress. The same order is observable in Christian experience. The first step in it prepares the mind for the second; and so on till we come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. In this important article then, Mr. WESLEY has spoken according to Scripture, and agreeably to the nature and fitness of things.

The Second important and necessary step in Christian experience, is, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, arising from a Scriptural view of his priestly office. When the mind

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† Acts xx, 20, 21.

is duly prepared to receive Christ in this character, pardon is held forth in the Gospel as a free gift, without money and without price ; Christ is here proposed to us as the atonement for our sins. How often has he set him forth as crucified before your eyes ? He has exhibited him to your view in his priestly character as the atonement for the sins of the world. He has often shewn you that the atonement which he has made is complete ; that the most vile helpless sinner who repents and turns from his sins may come and freely receive pardon as the gift of God in and through Christ ; and have free admittance to this throne of grace. How gloriously has he often explained this truth, and with what good effect to many of you ! You have been blessed and strengthened under his word : God has borne witness to the truth of it, and sealed its evidence on your hearts.

In explaining sanctification he has accurately distinguished it from justification, or the pardon of sin. Justification admits us into a state of grace and favour with God into the family of heaven ; into a state of fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, and lays the foundation of sanctification or Christian holiness in all its extent. He has shewn you that the tendency and end of your justification, is holiness of heart and holiness in all manner of conversation : that being justified by faith

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your relation to God is altered ; your sins are forgiven ; you are now become children of God and heirs of all the promises of the Gospel, and are quickened and animated with the spirit of it. In this stage of Christian experience, faith realizes the truths of the Gospel to the mind ; it becomes a practical principle of sufficient strength not only to restrain the passions, but to purify the heart, to influence every faculty of the soul, and every action in life, and to transform the man as a moral agent into the image of God. What a glorious view of the Gospel has he afforded you ; and how often has he instructed you that Christ, as the living head of his church, and acting upon it, in and by the means of every part of the Gospel, is sufficient to accomplish the end of his coming ; to change the heart, write his laws upon our mind, and make us like himself. He has urged these views of the Gospel upon you again and again, and roused you to an ardent pursuit of universal holiness and purity. It is true, there has been a great clamour raised against him on this subject, because he called his view of sanctification by the word perfection : many even of the professors of religion have thought him very absurd in this matter. I shall only observe upon this head, that, he has often explained to you what he meant by that term ; and, that he did not mean to differ with any one about a word, though

it be Scriptural. That he meant by the word perfection such a degree of the love of God and the love of man ; such a degree of the love of justice, truth, holiness and purity as will remove from the heart every contrary disposition towards God or man : and that this should be our state of mind in every situation, and in every circumstance of life. Oh ! what a paradise would this earth be, were all Christians sanctified in this degree ! Can there be a more amiable picture of the Gospel than this ? Is it irrational to tell us that God sent his Son into the world to make us new creatures ? To give us true views of God and of ourselves : of his love, mercy, truth and goodness : of his providential care and his all-sufficiency to bless us with every blessing in heavenly things in Christ Jesus ; to give us true views of life, death, and eternity, and hereby to arm us with divine strength to resist and overcome the world, the flesh and the devil ; and to give us those dispositions of mind which prepare us to worship, love, reverence and serve God, and to be just, true, and helpful to one another in this wilderness, as a preparation for the enjoyment of God, and the society of heaven. And is this, I say, to talk irrationally ? or is it, who is doing an injury to the world. How rashly do men judge and speak when their passions are inflamed ; but candour must acknowledge that in this he excelled

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and that, though his doctrine be contrary to the lives of the professors of religion in general, it is agreeable to the oracles of God, and to the nature and fitness of things.

9. There is another point that I mean to consider, relative to his religious opinions, and a point likewise that has been strangely misunderstood, and a great outcry raised against it; not indeed by the bulk of religious people, but by men of abilities, and of learning, who make pretensions to reason and calm discussion. The article I mean is this; that all the blessings of the Gospel are to be obtained by faith. He has told us expressly, that we are saved by faith: he has told us also, what he means by salvation; the being put in possession of the blessings of the Gospel: the being justified by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ; the being sanctified; or made holy in heart, and holy in all manner of conversation; he has taught you that all these things are to be obtained by faith. This has been thought a very irrational opinion: but I think it has been thought so very rashly. That it is consonant with the Scriptures is beyond a doubt: you can hardly open your Testament in any part but you will find this doctrine taught: you can hardly read a chapter in St. Paul's Epistles but you find it inculcated again and again. I apprehend it will bear the test of reason

also, and be found upon the strictest enquiry, to be agreeable to our state and condition in this life. Is it unreasonable, for instance, that we should believe in God? That we should believe in him who made us, who upholds us, and who governs all things; in him, who conducts the whole machine of nature in all its vast extent, and in all its complicated operations; who comprehends every thing as it were in one grasp, in whom all things live, and move, and have their being? Is it unreasonable that a poor mortal who knows not what is just coming upon him, not even what shall happen to him the next moment, should trust in God? That he should confide in the goodness and providence of him, who sees all things at one view, past, present and to come; and who sees man at one glance, in every period of his existence, with every surrounding circumstance? Must not every reasonable man allow that this is agreeable to the nature of God, and the state of man?

The gospel promiseth to us a state of intercourse and fellowship with God, in the present enjoyment of spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Faith is made a necessary condition of entering into this state of intercourse and enjoyment. In this, God has dealt with us in a way suitable to our faculties, and our state of intercourse with one another. For you can have no kind of con-

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nection with each other, without faith: all must acknowledge that faith is the bond of human society. Can you transact any kind of business without it? It is evident that you cannot. You can have no enjoyment of the things of this life without an act of faith preceding it. All your expectations, and future prospects in life are founded on faith. You will find, upon examination, that in every branch of business, in every social intercourse, you must first believe, and act from faith, and then you will obtain the thing you expected, provided your faith be rightly placed. You cannot engage a servant, without faith in him. A merchant cannot transact business with any one, without first having faith in the person with whom he transacts that business. When the husbandman plows his land and sows his seed, faith is the principle from which he acts. Unless then we act from faith, we can have no fellowship with one another, nor enjoy the comforts of life. And we may further observe, that if the mind be sufficiently furnished with knowledge and prudence, our success will be in proportion to the degree of faith, and the exertions that are made in consequence of it. This great man then, has shewn himself well acquainted both with Scripture and human nature, in explaining this important article of Christian experience.

It would be easy to shew at large how
faith

Faith operates on the mind in every step of Christian experience. In repentance, the first step towards the Christian life, a man must believe that there is a God, who is holy, just and good: he must believe the word of God; that there is a judgment to come, when every thought and action will be examined, and when the wicked will be condemned to punishment, and the righteous will inherit eternal life. He must believe also that God is merciful, that pardon may be obtained through Jesus Christ; for a view of the holiness of God and of his own sinfulness, would, without this, produce despair, which is not gospel repentance. When, by the grace of God, these things are impressed upon the mind of a man, with full conviction of their truth, they awaken the conscience, and excite him to attention and self-examination, and gradually prepare him to receive Christ in his mediatorial character.

With respect to pardon, when the mind is rightly prepared for it, the gospel has made faith the express condition of it. How ably has our aged Minister in the gospel established this truth, and defended it against all opposition. Pardon of sin is obtained for us by the blood of Christ, it is promised to us by the word of God; but it must be received by faith; we must believe in the word of promise, in order to receive it. And he that believeth is justified: he is

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justified now, the moment he receives Christ as his Mediator, his Saviour, his Atonement. His faith is counted to him for righteousness, it gives him a title to the promise of pardon, and to the blessings connected with it.

If we examine further how faith purifies the heart, we shall find that there is nothing irrational in the doctrine. There is nothing better adapted to remove every evil from the human heart than faith in Christ; there is nothing more efficacious, as a means to preserve us from evil through life, than faith rightly explained and rightly exercised. Faith as it unites us to Christ our living head, gives us a principle of the divine life; we begin to live unto God, from a principle of love in the heart; to live a life that is given by him who is the resurrection and the life, and who raiseth the soul to an union with God. When this has taken place, old things are done away, all things are become new: the views, the purposes and the affections of the man are changed: he no longer acts from the same motives, nor by the same rule as before; a new principle of action is formed in the heart, which directly leads to holiness and to God.

Faith, as a practical principle, is called by St. Paul, *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* It gives the things hoped for a present subsistence in
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the mind, in that degree which is suited to our present state. It is the evidence of things not seen : it realizes the truths of the Gospel to the mind, and enables it to view them with as much certainty as we have of the existence of corporeal objects, when we feel their influence on our senses. A man who acts under the influence of this faith, who has Gospel truths full in his view, with all the certainty that his senses can give him of the existence of external objects, will undoubtedly find his heart powerfully affected by them. This faith will work by love, it will purify the heart from every thing contrary to the mind that was in Christ. It will enable him to acknowledge God in all his ways, to set him continually before his eyes, to live, as in his presence, with a view to his glory, and resigned to his will. Let us instance in one thing only at present. Suppose a man believe that there is a Providence which superintends human affairs : if he be assured that Divine Love can intend nothing but good in every thing that happens to him, and that Infinite Wisdom cannot err in adapting the means to the end intended : if he be as fully assured of these truths as he is of the existence of the things which he sees or hears ; will not this faith lead him to a reverential fear of God, and a perfect resignation to his will in every occurrence of life ? It appears to me certain, that it

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will make him cautious in his conduct, and attentive to every part of his duty. He will be anxiously careful for nothing, but living under a deep sense of the Divine Presence and care, his mind will be kept in perfect peace because it is staid upon God. In this then our aged Father in Christ, appears to have spoken agreeably to Scripture and reason.

10. Let us now take notice of his notions of the universality of Gospel blessings. Here he shone with peculiar lustre ; here he did honour to God and the Divine attributes ; he maintained that God is a God of love, not to a part of his creatures only, but to all ; that he who is the Father of all, who made all, who stands in the same relation to all his creatures ; loves them all : that he loved the world and gave his Son a ransom for all without distinction of persons ; that there is no respect of persons with God. This is an amiable character of the Deity. It always appeared to him, that to represent God as partial, as confining his love to a few, was unworthy our notions of the Deity. He therefore represented the Gospel in the most glorious and extensive point of view. He maintained that Christ died for all men, that he is to be offered to all ; that all are to be invited to come to him ; and that whosoever comes in the way which God has appointed may partake of his blessings. He maintained, That
sufficient

sufficient grace is given to all, in that way and manner which is best adapted to influence the mind. And may we not appeal to every man's experience for the truth of this? How often has he appealed to the consciences of men? Have not your hearts reproved you? Have you not at times trembled for your sins? Nay, have you not done more than this; have you not been ashamed of yourselves, have you not detested your own conduct in secret, when none has seen you but God, and none has been privy to your actions but your own heart? Whence does this arise? Certainly not from man but from God. It is an evidence that there is salvation for thee O man who art in this state; God is not willing that thou shouldst perish; he is calling thee, inviting thee, to turn from thy sins, and turn to God. He has thus stated the truths of the Gospel with convincing evidence to the candid mind, which is open to the conviction of truth. And herein he spoke according to the Scriptures. The expressions of Scripture are positive in favour of this doctrine: there are passages which so positively declare it, that it is impossible to give any other construction to them without the greatest violence: but there is not a single passage in the New Testament, which seems to favour the doctrine that Christ died for a part of mankind only, which

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It is true he has raised some enemies by this doctrine. He has been called an Arminian; and perhaps many who have used the term have annexed an idea to it by no means just. How often has he wished, and it is devoutly to be wished by all the friends of true religion, that the names of Calvinist and Arminian were buried in oblivion; they have only tended to keep up strife and discord, amongst those who ought to love one another as brethren, however they may have differed on some points of doctrine. But some have supposed that to be an Arminian is to maintain salvation by works: it is to degrade Christ: to throw the lustre of redemption by Christ into a cloud at any rate, if not to overturn it. Was this the case with our minister of the Gospel? Did he not preach free grace as much as any Calvinist? Did he not assert that pardon is the free gift of God, without money and without price? Did he not assert that repentance itself only prepares the heart to receive the gift of God? that it does not give any kind of merit to the man. How often has he declared to you that the best works any man can perform need atonement. So far was he from putting works in the place of the blood of Christ, that he only gave them, in my opinion, their just value; he placed them in the order of

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Christian experience where the Gospel places them ; where we ought all to place them ; as the fruits of a living operative faith, and as the measure of our future reward ; for every man will be rewarded, not for his works, but according to the measure of them. This is undoubtedly a Scriptural representation of this matter, and it would be well if all Christians were to attend to this distinction more than they do. It is to be feared that some may have cried out against works, not from the very best motives, at least from some inclination to relax in holiness. The way in which some have preached faith, has done no honour to the Gospel ; and may probably have encouraged some persons to pay less attention to Christian duties than they ought to do. But we must say of him, that while he insisted on good works, as the necessary fruits of faith, he gave the whole glory of salvation to God from first to last ; not only in the general plan of it, but in the order of communicating the benefits of Christ to the mind. He believed that man would never turn to God, if God did not begin the work : nay, how often has he told you, that the first approaches of grace to the mind are irresistible ; what I mean is, that a man cannot avoid being convinced that he is a sinner ; that God by various means awakens his conscience ; and whether the man will or no, these convictions approach him. Here you
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fee, he gave all the glory of the work of salvation in the heart, to the grace of God, he ascribes no merit to works : he tells you indeed that in proportion as you improve the grace given, you shall have more, and be rewarded according to your works, with grace here as well as glory hereafter.

11. There is one subject ^{more}, which, though it be of the utmost importance in religion, I must touch upon as briefly as possible. The subject which I mean is Christian experience. It is well known that this able Minister of the Gospel, together with his brother Charles and the Rev. Mr. WHITEFIELD, have been the principal instruments in the hands of God, of diffusing the knowledge of this important article of the Christian religion, amongst the bulk of the people of this country. Considered in this view only, they have been a blessing to every class and order of men. For though all have not believed their report, yet many have believed it in every station of life, and borne a happy testimony to the truth of it. How ably has our beloved Father illustrated and defended this part of Christianity ! Many indeed have supposed that what we call experience is mere imagination : that it is nothing more than the working up of our minds into a fancy of something which can have no foundation in truth or reason. This has been the general opinion of what

the Methodists call experience, and hence has arisen the charge of enthusiasm. But it appears to me, that Christian experience is something real and not imaginary: that it rests upon as solid a foundation as the evidence of our external senses. I think that we have no more reason to doubt the reality of our experience, when it is Scriptural, than we have to doubt of the existence of an object which we see with our eyes, or of a sound which we hear, when these organs are in the most sound and healthy state. But let us enquire what Christian experience is, and what degree of certainty there is in it.

Christian experience is the present possession of the benefits of the Gospel which relate to this life, and which prepare us for the enjoyment of God in glory. If we use the word in the most extensive sense, so as to include the preparation of the mind to receive Christ in his mediatorial character, it will imply repentance towards God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the fruits of the spirit, so admirably described by St. Paul; love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness and temperance,* with all the privileges of the Christian state here. In the Gospel we are commanded to repent and turn to God; to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be
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* Gal. v. 22, 23.

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filled with the fruits of the spirit. The Gospel promises every necessary aid and assistance to put us in possession of these benefits ; and we read also in the New Testament of many persons who professed to have experience of these things. If indeed the Gospel be a fable, then the things it speaks of, and the promises it makes, signify nothing real, they are purely imaginary, and to profess any experience of them must be delusion. But, as we have the most certain evidence that the Gospel is of God ; that it gives a true account of what God has done and is now doing for the salvation of men, and of the means by which he is accomplishing this great purpose, the promises it gives us must signify something real, and they must be as certain as the existence and truth of God himself. It is certain then, that we may experience the blessings it promises to us, if we seek them in the way which God has appointed.

If we enquire into the evidence which a man has that he does experience the things we here speak of, we shall find that it is of the strongest kind possible. If a man's understanding be enlightened with Gospel truths ; if his conscience be awakened to decide justly on his motives and actions, as they are related to God and his law ; if in consequence of this, he turn from his sins, and is humbled, abased and ashamed before God for them, and prays for mercy :

how is it possible for such a change as this is, to take place, in the dictates of his conscience, and in the opinion he has had of himself, and he not know it? The very supposition is absurd; he must be as conscious of it as he is of his own existence, or of any thing that happens to him. In like manner, when a person in the state I have now described, is enabled to believe in Jesus Christ to the saving of his soul; to rely fully upon him for pardon and acceptance with God; must not such a person be conscious of this act of his mind, and the change in his views of God, and in the feelings of his mind that are subsequent to it? Will he not be as conscious and certain of these things as he is when he sees an object before him, or feels pleasure or pain? If he that believeth be filled with love, joy, peace and the other fruits of the spirit just mentioned, must he not be certain of this? Our internal consciousness carries the same conviction of reality with it, as our external senses. Would it not appear exceedingly absurd to you, if you heard a person say in the common affairs of life, that he loved an object dearly, but that he was not conscious of any love? That he rejoiced exceedingly in a thing, but that he did not feel any joy? It is just the same in Christian experience. If from proper views of the Gospel and faith in Christ, I feel peace, I cannot be ignorant of it; if I look up to God through

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Christian experience then, as the Rev. Mr. WESLEY has long explained it, has certainty in it: if a man has it he cannot be ignorant of it. But I must say that those who have it not, cannot form a just conception of it. How is it possible for any man who has not felt the peace of God to form a just notion of it? Its evidence stands on the same ground as the evidence of our external senses. For if a man had never seen colours, he could not form any true idea of them: if a man had never felt pain or pleasure, he could not be taught to understand what they are, however perfect his rational faculties might be; he must feel them to know them. So it is with Christian experience, you must enter into it and feel it, and then you will know what it is; and as easily distinguish it from the feelings or consciousness arising from other things, as you distinguish seeing from hearing, or the touch from smell.

III. 1. Having considered the character of the Rev. Mr. WESLEY as a man of learning, and well qualified to examine a subject and discover the truth; and having taken a view of his principal and leading opinions in religion: my intention is, very
briefly,

briefly to consider, his labours as a Minister of the Gospel, and the effects of them.

2. It is evident from what has been said, that Mr. WESLEY, was a man of industry from his youth, and employed his time to the greatest advantage in pursuit of literary knowledge. And after he was convinced of the pure doctrines of the Gospel, he was assiduous in declaring them to others. How few possess the necessary qualifications for useful studies and for active life! These were united in him in a very high degree. His leading doctrines, which I have examined, discover a diligent and patient examination of the Scriptures, great strength of judgment, and closeness of reasoning: and he was not less remarkable for his zeal, activity and steadiness in propagating them amongst the people, for which many thousands have had reason to thank God in their dying moments. At first he preached in the churches wherever an opportunity offered; but his doctrines giving offence to some, and the crowds that attended him raising envy in others, the churches were by degrees shut against him. If we consider his firm attachment to the church of England, and his fondness for regularity and order in church government, it will appear surprising that this circumstance did not damp his zeal, and shake the firmness of his mind. It is a happy circumstance that it did not. Being convinced of the importance of the doctrines

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doctrines of the Gospel to the people at large, and that it was his duty to preach the glad tidings of peace and salvation to all; knowing also that God loves mercy rather than sacrifice, he thought it would be criminal in him to sacrifice his views of the Gospel, and his opportunities of doing good, to the prejudices of others. He therefore went out into the high ways and hedges to invite sinners to repentance and make them partakers of Gospel blessings. He must have foreseen, that in taking this step mankind would put different constructions on his conduct; and, that, to attempt a thing so new in the world would raise many enemies against him, and expose him to many difficulties. Whatever prospects his former situation had afforded him, of ease, honour or wealth, these he left behind him; and nothing could at this time present itself to his view, but labour and weariness, accompanied with reproach, persecution and contempt from men. Is it possible to suppose for a moment, that a man of calm reflection, as Mr. WESLEY was, who never took any step of importance without mature deliberation, wou'd have acted as he did at this time, without a full conviction that he was doing his duty? That the doctrines which he taught were the truths of the Gospel, and of the utmost importance to the happiness of men? He must have had more than a bare conviction of these truths; he must

must have been animated with an ardent desire to glorify God in the propagation of his truth, and to be instrumental of good to his fellow creatures. Candour will acknowledge that these were his motives ; the subsequent part of his life has made it evident, and his conduct is not to be accounted for on any other principles.

3. The regularity and steadiness with which Mr. WESLEY pursued his labours, and the extent to which he carried them, are almost beyond conception, and sufficient to awaken astonishment in the mind of any man who reflects upon them. When he first went out to preach in different parts of the kingdom, and to carry the light of the Gospel to those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, he was surrounded with difficulties on every side. In many places he had scarcely food to eat, nor a place to lie down in. In some places, he was considered as an enemy to his country ; in others, it was said that he had private and interested views in what he did ; for few could at first imagine that any man would undergo the labour and fatigue which he underwent, purely for the good of others. All manner of evil was spoken against him falsely and propagated with diligence : and he was many times persecuted with a degree of rage that threatened his destruction. But none of these things ever moved him, he still continued to travel from place to place

place to do good to those who reviled and persecuted him. He laboured day and night for the good of the people. This he did through persecution, reproach and every difficulty that lay in his way: nothing turned him aside from the grand object of preaching the Gospel to the poor. Here we cannot but admire the strength and firmness of his resolution, and his love of God and man, which enabled him to persevere in this arduous and difficult undertaking. O what a glorious influence would the Gospel soon acquire over the minds of men, if those who are true ministers of it, had the bold, the firm, the intrepid spirit which Mr. WESLEY has shewn: Did they, like him, give up their ease, their pleasure, and every thing which is counted dear in this world, to do good unto men, to glorify God, and bring men to the obedience of Christ! There are many ministers of the Gospel who wish well to experimental religion, and many who truly preach it, but their preaching is limited to a few persons comparatively speaking: his mind expanded to larger views of public good: his arms would have embraced, if possible, all mankind, and as far as his strength would carry him he spread the knowledge of Gospel truth into every part of these kingdoms.

4. But Mr. WESLEY was not only proof against labour, persecution and reproach, he was proof also against the softer and finer feelings

feelings of human nature, when they stood in the way of the great work in which he was engaged. I mean those feelings only, which are apt to effeminate the mind, or warp a man from a uniform and steady attention to his duty. He had a peculiar pleasure in reading and study; and every literary man knows the force of this passion, and how apt it is to make him encroach on the time which ought to be employed in other duties. But Mr. WESLEY had the resolution to lay aside any subject, whenever the hour came that he was to set out on his journey, or was to preach or visit the sick. He had a high relish for rational and polite conversation; but whatever company might happen to come where he was, to converse with him during supper, he would constantly retire to rest at his usual hour, that he might rise at four o'clock in the morning, which was his constant practice winter and summer for more than sixty years together. He was far from being insensible to the feelings of friendship; but whenever any friendship which he had formed, interfered with the good of the work he was called to, he could immediately break it off. The work to which God had called him occupied all his time and attention: he considered it as the business of his life, and sacrificed every pleasure and gratification to it. How much do all of you owe to him, who has sacrificed every thing dear to flesh and

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blood for so many years together to benefit you ! It appears quite astonishing and more than human, to see a man pursuing the public good with so much ardour and steadiness for so long a time, denying himself every gratification and pleasure, except that of doing good. You know well I do not exaggerate his character ; you know this has been his general character for the number of years he has been engaged in this work.

5. The industry of Mr. WESLEY was almost incredible. From four o'clock in the morning till eight at night his time was employed in reading, writing, preaching, meeting the people, visiting the sick or travelling. Before the infirmities of age came upon him, he usually travelled on horseback, and would sometimes ride thirty, forty or fifty miles in a day, and preach two, three, or sometimes four times. He had a constant correspondence with some persons in the different Societies all over the three kingdoms, and with the Preachers in every part, and would answer their letters with great punctuality. He knew the state of the Societies in general, and of many individuals in each of them. He read most publications that were deemed valuable, if they related to religion or natural philosophy, and often made extracts from them. If we consider the whole of his labours, and compare them with what most men of industry have done, we may say that

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he has lived life two or three times over.

6. The effects of Mr. WESLEY's labours have been much more extensive than any person would at first imagine. He was at the head of the little company first formed at Oxford. And if we consider the state of these kingdoms, when the two Mr. WESLEY's and Mr. WHITEFIELD first went out to preach publickly, we must acknowledge that experimental religion was almost lost, at least among the common people. Without being censorious, I apprehend we may say, that religion was little more than loose opinions, and modes and forms of worship among the people in general.* It appears to me evident, that the preaching of these three men of God has had a very extensive influence on all denominations of religious people; it has been the means of awakening their attention to the grand and leading principles of the Gospel: and of making them consider the experimental part of it. Their labours also have had a happy influence on the ministers of the Gospel of every denomination, although some may have been ashamed to own it. With respect to the whole body of the people commonly called Methodists, they have been

* Dr. Watts, Dr. Doddridge and several others, were excellent men, and well acquainted with experimental religion. The author does not intend any reflection on these and other good and able Ministers of the Gospel. He rejoices to mention their excellencies.

the means of raising them up. What were you, O ye Methodists, before you heard these three servants of God, and those associated with them declare the glad tidings of peace and salvation? You were scattered in the world, ignorant of God, and of the things that belong to your peace and salvation: but you that were not a people, are now become the people of God by their instrumentality. And what shall I say to you my brethren, who have been more immediately connected with him who is now no more with us? You have been knit together by him in the bonds of Christian fellowship: you have been growing up under his paternal care for many years. He has nourished and cherished you as a tender father: he has watched over you with anxious care, as a faithful shepherd over his flock. Consider now the effects of his labours on different bodies of people who have no immediate connexion with us; consider the numerous Societies spread over the three kingdoms in connexion with him, and over whom he exercised the care of a father; extend your views to America, and consider the thousands and tens of thousands, I had almost said millions who have felt the influence of his labours in the course of sixty years; and it seems an extent of usefulness beyond what one could imagine any one man capable of. But the hand of God has been in it; the Providence of God has

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been

been over it : and it is evident that he was raised up of God for this great work.

7. The effects of Mr. WESLEY's labours on civil Society have been, and still will be, very considerable. Not only particular parts of the kingdom have received benefit from the preaching of the Methodists, but society in general must feel some beneficial influence from them. If you consider the whole body of people usually called Methodists, and the immense numbers who attend their places of worship and are benefited by them, they will amount to many hundred thousands. These are dispersed through the three kingdoms, and occupy almost every situation in life : they are become more conscientious in all their ways ; more sober and regular in their behaviour ; more true to their word, and more attentive to every social duty than they were before. They are better husbands and wives, better masters and servants, and better neighbours and friends than before they heard the preaching of the Methodists. Society in general therefore has received benefit from them.

8. There is another view in which we may consider his usefulness ; a view which I should not perhaps have taken any notice of, but for the sake of a pamphlet just now published ; in which it is observed, that the Methodists are become so large a body of people

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people, that they ought to attract the notice of government. You all know that the Rev. Mr. WESLEY, was a friend to the King; that he loved him, and was a warm and steady friend to the government; you know that he enforced these principles as far as ever he could, on the minds of all that heard him. The Methodists then, are not only made better citizens, but better subjects also. It is a rule in the Society, that all the members of it shall submit themselves to the laws, and not defraud the King of his just dues. If it is known that any one acts contrary to this rule he is put away from the Society. Now if you consider a large body of people, increasing on every side, spreading themselves through the whole kingdom, who are friends to the King and government, friends in every point of view, and from principle; you will acknowledge, that whatever influence these people may have upon government, it must be friendly and have a tendency to peace and good order. And if all the people were Methodists, no times of difficulty could come; but if such times should arrive, the more numerous this body of people is, the better it will be for this country.

Thus our dear and aged father in Christ, spent near sixty years in the labour and work of the Lord, going about from place to place,

place, convincing gainfayers, comforting the mourners, building up and strengthening those that believed, and the church of God increased daily under his paternal care. Thus he spent his life: and his labours lasted very nearly to the close of it. Oh how happy a life to be spent in doing good; to have no attachment but to God and his work; to forsake all for it. And his conduct in private life was conformable to his public character. How many persons have been ready to say, that Mr. WESLEY had private ends in view: that he was accumulating money and would die rich. All that knew him, knew how false these accusations were; but all did not know him; thousands however did, who have been witnesses of his integrity and disinterestedness: and thousands of the poor have experienced his benevolence. He constantly made a rule of giving all that he had to the poor: this was a favourite practice with him. He attended to the words of Christ: *For as much as ye have done it unto these, ye have done it unto me.* He considered the poor as left upon earth, that the followers of Christ may shew their benevolence to them as they would to the person of Christ himself, were he upon earth. How many have said, how gladly would I have entertained Christ, had I lived in that country where he appeared, and at the time of his appearance. But he has left the poor behind him, that you may exercise

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exercise your benevolence towards them, as you would have done to him. Mr. WESLEY took a pleasure and delight in doing this, and sometimes left himself so destitute, that he had hardly sufficient to defray his travelling expences.

I shall only mention one circumstance more. I was asked the other day whether Mr. WESLEY had not many Meeting houses and Chapels that were his property, and whether he did not die rich. I answered, Sir, Mr. WESLEY had not one house of his own in the three kingdoms, neither a private house nor a preaching house; therefore he did not die rich. What money he had, which was the produce of his books, and what charitable persons gave him to distribute to the poor, he constantly gave away: and as he observes, it only went through his hands, but none of it remained with him.

We must naturally suppose that a person so devoted to the work and service of God and for so long a time, must be an object of divine approbation; it is impossible to conceive of him otherwise. And God shewed marks of approbation to him even in his last moments; which was a great comfort both to him and to his numerous friends.

IV. 1. I was called to Mr. WESLEY on Friday the 25th of February. When I entered the room he cheerfully said, " Doctor,

tor, they are more afraid than hurt." I found great oppression on the brain, a universal tremor, great debility of the whole nervous system, and a fever, which I considered as symptomatic, depending wholly on the state of debility. I wrote for him; but he neither took medicine nor nourishment in a quantity sufficient to be of any use. Friday night and Saturday forenoon the lethargic symptoms increased. It now appeared to me that the powers of nature were exhausted; and I was so certain of his approaching dissolution, that I desired Mr. *Bradford* to ask him if he had any affairs which he wished to settle; or if there was any person either in London or in the country, whom he desired to see. To these questions he gave no answer. We were all extremely anxious that the lethargy might be removed before his departure hence; and on Saturday evening the means made use of were successful: the lethargic symptoms abated, and on Sunday morning he seemed quite in possession of his faculties, and to feel his situation. His debility however increased, and the fever continued with alternate changes of flushings and paleness. On Monday the 28th. I desired he might be asked if he would have any other physician called in to attend him: but this he absolutely refused. On Tuesday it appeared to me that death was approaching, and in the evening this was very evident.

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I was with him till past twelve o'clock that night. I asked him, before I left the room, if he knew me : he answered yes, and pressed my hand with all the little strength he had. From this time he gradually sunk, and about twenty minutes before ten on Wednesday morning, the 2d of March, he died without a struggle or a groan, in the eighty-eighth year of his age, and went to receive the glorious reward of his labours.

The following is an abridgment of the written account of the close of this great and good man's life, which was read toward the end of the Discourse.

On Thursday the 17th of February, Mr. WESLEY preached at *Lambeth*. When he came home he seemed very unwell, but on being asked how he did, only said, he believed he had taken a little cold.

Friday the 18th, Mr. WESLEY read and wrote, as usual, and preached at *Chelsea* in the evening from, "*The King's business requires haste*;" but was obliged to stop, once or twice, and told the people, his cold so affected his voice as to prevent his speaking without those necessary pauses. He had a high degree of fever all the way home.

Saturday the 19th, reading and writing filled up most of his time, though to those that were with him, his complaints seemed evidently increasing. He dined at Mrs. Griffith's,

Griffith's, Islington, and while there, desired a friend to read to him the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh chapters of *Job*. He rose, (according to custom) early in the morning, but utterly unfit for his Sabbath's exercise: at seven o'clock he was obliged to lie down, and slept between three and four hours. When he awoke, he said, "I have not had such a comfortable sleep this fortnight past:" the effects of it were soon gone, and in the afternoon he lay down, and slept an hour or two: afterwards two of his own discourses on our Lord's sermon on the Mount were read to him, and in the evening he came down to supper.

Monday the 21st, He seemed much better, and though his friends tried to dissuade him from it, he would keep an engagement made some time before to dine with Mr. G. at *Twittenham*. Miss *Wesley*, and E. R. accompanied him: in his way thither he called on Lady *Mary Fitzgerald*: the conversation was truly profitable, and well became a last visit. At T. he seemed much better, and the first and last visit to that pleasing family and lovely place, will, I trust, prove a blessing. When we came home he seemed much better, and on Tuesday went on with his usual work, and preached in the evening at the *City-Road*, and seemed better than he had been for some days. Our hopes again revived, and though we feared the little excursion which

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lay before him might be too much for his strength, yet we flattered ourselves with his longer stay. On Wednesday morning Mr. Rogers went with him to *Leatherhead* to visit a family who have lately begun to receive the truth. On Thursday he paid his last visit to Mr. Wolff's family at *Balam*. Here Mr. Rogers says he was chearful, and seemed nearly as well as usual, till Friday. about breakfast time, when he seemed very heavy. About eleven o'clock Mrs. Wolff brought him home: I was struck with his manner of getting out of the coach, and going into the house, but more so as he went up stairs, and when he sat down in the chair. I ran for some refreshment, but before I could get any thing for him, he had sent Mr. R——, out of the room, and desired not to be interrupted for half an hour by any one, adding, not even if *Joseph Bradford* come. Mr. Bradford came a few minutes after, and as soon as the limited time was expired, went into the room; immediately after he came out and desired me to mull some wine and carry it to Mr. WESLEY: he drank a little, and seemed sleepy. In a few minutes he was seized with sickness, threw it up and said, "I must lie down." We immediately sent for Dr. *Whitehead*: on his coming in, Mr. WESLEY smiled and said, "Doctor, they are more afraid than hurt." I knew not how he judged of our fears; for I had said nothing nor do I know that any one
around

around him had at that time familiar apprehensions to my own,

Saturday the 26th, he continued much the same; spoke but little, and if roused to answer a question, or take a little refreshment, (which was seldom more than a spoonful at a time) soon dosed again. On Saturday night the stupor abated, though the fever still continued, but not so violent. On Sunday morning with a little of Mr. Bradford's help, Mr. WESLEY got up, took a cup of tea, and seemed much better. Many of our friends were full of hopes: but it seemed to me only an answer to our prayer, and that our Lord was about to indulge us with such a mixture in our cup, as would, at least for the present, soften the approaching stroke. Mr. WESLEY, while sitting in his chair looked quite chearful, and in a manner we all deeply felt, repeated the latter part of that verse in the Scripture hymns on "*Forsake me not when my strength faileth.*"

Till glad I lay this body down
Thy servant Lord attend;
And O! my life of mercy crown
With a triumphant end!

Soon after in a most emphatical manner he said, "Our friend *Lazarus* sleepeth." Some friends then, present, speaking rather too much

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much to him, he tried to exert himself, but was soon exhausted and obliged to lie down. After being quiet awhile, he looked up and said, "Speak to me, I cannot speak." On which Miss *Wesley* and I, there being no one else in the room, said, "Shall we pray with you, Sir?" He earnestly replied, "Yes," and while we prayed that our gracious Lord would let down rays of heavenly glory into his waiting spirit, and pour out on us, and all his children, the promised Comforter, his whole soul seemed engaged with God for an answer, and his hearty Amen thrilled through us. About half after two he said, "There is no need for more: (nor indeed had he strength to speak much) when at *Bristol*, * my words were, "I the chief of sinners am, but Jesus died for me." I said, "Is this the present language of your heart, and do you now feel as you then did?" He replied, "Yes." I then said "Our precious Immanuel has pur-

* At the *Bristol* Conference in the year 1783, Mr. *Wesley* was taken very ill: neither he nor his friends thought he would recover. From the nature of his complaint, he thought a spasm would probably seize his stomach, and occasion sudden death. Under these views of his situation, he said to Mr. *Bradford*, "I have been reflecting on my past life: I have been wandering up and down between fifty and sixty years, endeavouring in my poor way, to do a little good to my fellow creatures: and, now it is probable that there is but a few steps between me and death, what have I to trust to for salvation? I can see nothing which I have done or suffered, that will bear looking at. I have no other plea than this; I the chief of sinners am; but Jesus died for me." The sentiment here expressed, and his reference to it in his last sickness, plainly shews how steadily he had persevered in the same views of the Gospel, with which he set out to preach it."

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chased, has promised all." He earnestly replied, "He is all, He is all." In the evening he got up again, and speaking of a lady he had only lately known, he said, "He believed she had real religion: how necessary for every one to be on the right foundation! "I the chief of Sinners am, but Jesus died for me." We must be justified by faith, and then go on to Sanctification."

Monday the 28th, his weakness increased apace. He slept most of the day, spoke but little; yet that little testified how much his whole heart was taken up in the care of the churches, the glory of God, and the things pertaining to that kingdom to which he was hastening. Once in a low, but very distinct manner he said, "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus." He asked Mr. Rankin what the words were which he had preached from at *Hampstead* a little while before. He was told they were these; "Brethren ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich." He replied, "That is the foundation, the only foundation, and there is no other." He also repeated three or four times in the space of a few hours, "We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus."

Tuesday, March 1st, after a very restless night

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night (though when asked whether he was in pain, he generally answered, "No," and never complained through his whole illness, except once, of a pain in his left breast, when he drew his breath) he began singing,

" All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restor'd,
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear our omnipotent Lord !
Who meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race :
Once more to thy people return,
And reign in thy kingdom of grace.

" Oh ! wouldst thou again be made known,
Again in the spirit descend ;
And set up in each of thine own,
A kingdom that never shall end.
Thou only art able to bless,
And make the glad nations obey ;
And bid the dire enmity cease,
And bow the whole world to thy sway."

Here his strength failed ; but after lying still awhile, he said, " I want to write : " I brought him a pen and ink, and on putting the pen into his hand, and holding the paper before him, he said, I cannot." I replied, " Let me write for you, Sir : " tell

me what you would say ? " Nothing," replied he, " but that God is with us." In the forenoon he said, " I will get up." While his things were getting ready, he broke out in a manner which, considering his extreme weakness, astonished us all, in these blessed words,

" I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler pow'rs :
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.

" Happy the man whose hopes rely
On Israel's God ; he made the sky,
And earth, and seas with all their train,
His truth for ever stands secure,
He saves th' oppress'd, he feeds the poor,
And none shall find his promise vain."

When he got into his chair, we saw him change for death : but he, regardless of his dying frame, said with a weak voice, " Lord, thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those that cannot : Speak Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that thou loosest tongues." He then sung,

" To

" To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who sweetly all agree."

Here his voice failed him, after gasping for breath, he said, " Now we have done." We were obliged to lay him down on the bed from which he rose no more; but after lying still, and sleeping a little he called me to him, and said "*Betsy*, you Mr. B—, &c. pray and praise." We knelt down, and truly our hearts were filled with a sense of the Divine Presence: a little after he added, " Let me be buried in nothing but what is woollen, and let my corpse be carried in my coffin into the Chapel." Then, as if done with all below, he again begged we would pray and praise. We called up several friends that were in the house, and all kneeled down. Mr. *Broadbent* prayed at which time Mr. *Wesley's* fervor of spirit was visible to every one present; but in particular parts of the prayer his whole soul seemed to be engaged in a manner, which evidently shewed how ardently he longed for the full accomplishment of our united desires. One thing we could not but remark; that when Mr. B. was praying in a very expressive manner, that if God was about to take away our father and our head to his eternal rest, he would be pleased to continue and increase his blessing upon the doctrine and discipline which he had long made his aged

servant the means of propagating, and establishing in the world : such a degree of fervor accompanied his loud *Amen*, as was every way expressive of his soul's being engaged in the answer of our petitions. On rising from our knees, he took Mr. B's hand, drew him near, and with the utmost placidness saluted him, and said, " Farewell, farewell." Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, Mr. Horton, and others drew near the bed side, and he took the same affectionate leave of them all.

The next pleasing awful scene was the great exertion he made in order to make Mr. B. understand that he fervently desired, a Sermon he had written on the love of God should be scattered abroad and given away to every body. Something else he wished to say, but finding we could not understand what he said, he paused a little, and then with all the remaining strength he had, cried out, " The best of all is, God is with us ;" and then, as if to assert the faithfulness of our promise-keeping Jehovah, and comfort the hearts of his weeping friends, lifting up his dying arm in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph not to be expressed, again repeated the heart-reviving words, " The best of all is, God is with us." Some time after, giving him something to wet his parched lips, he said, " It will not do, we must take the consequence ; never mind the poor carcase." A little time after this, seeing
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Mr. *Rogers*, and Mr. *Rankin* stand by his bed side, he asked, "Who are these?" (his sight now almost gone preventing him from distinctly knowing his most intimate friends, except in a peculiar light, or by their voice,) being informed who they were, Mr. *Rogers* then said, "Sir, we are come to rejoice with you; you are going to receive your crown." "It is the Lord's doing, he replied, and marvellous in our eyes." On being told Mrs. *Wesley* was come, he said, "He giveth his servants rest." He thanked her as she pressed his hand, and affectionately endeavoured to kiss her. On wetting his lips he said, "We thank thee, O Lord for these and all thy mercies: bless the Church and King: grant us truth and peace through Jesus Christ our Lord for ever and ever!" At another time, "He causeth his servants to lie down in peace." Then pausing a little, he cried, "The clouds drop fatness," and soon after, "The Lord is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge!" He then called us to prayer. Mr. *Broodbent* was again the mouth of our full hearts, and though Mr. *Wesley* was greatly exhausted by these exertions, he appeared still more fervent in spirit. These exertions were however too much for his feeble frame, and most of the night following, though he often attempted to repeat the psalm before-mentioned, he could only get out,

"I'll praise—I'll praise!"—

On

On Wednesday morning, we found the closing scene drew near. Mr. *Bradford*, his faithful friend and most affectionate Son, prayed with him, and the last word he was heard to articulate was, "Farewell!" A few minutes before ten, while Miss *Wesley*, Mr. *Horton*, Mr. *Brackenbury*, Mr. and Mrs. *Rogers*, Dr. *Whitehead*, Mr. *Whitfield*, Mr. *Bradford*, and *E. R.* were kneeling around his bed; according to his often expressed desire, without a lingring groan, this man of God gathered up his feet in the presence of his brethren! We felt what is inexpressible. The ineffable sweetness that filled our hearts as our beloved Pastor, Father, and Friend entered his Master's joy, for a few moments blunted the edge of our painful feelings, on this truly glorious and melancholy occasion."

E. R.

From the outlines which I have now drawn of the illustrious character of the late Rev. Mr. *WESLEY*, I hope it will appear that he did not follow cunningly devised fables, but the evidence of Gospel truth.* I trust also, that they who are

* I do not mean to assert in this Discourse, that Mr. *Wesley* was never mistaken in any thing: this would be to make him more than a man. I have selected only the grand and leading doctrines which he taught; and have endeavoured to shew that they are agreeable to Reason and Scripture.

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candid, will perceive, that we have not adopted these opinions merely because Mr. WESLEY taught them, but because they appear to us to be true. Let us then, my brethren, hold fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast to the end ; and prove to the world that our doctrines are true, not only by reason and argument, but by our tempers and our conduct. Let us be careful to act worthy of our holy vocation, and persevere to the end in well doing, and we shall receive with him who is now gone before us, the promised reward. Which may God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

F I N I S.



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